3 Disclosure Suits Hit Security Units

By George Lardner Jr. 5-2-75
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The secrecy surrounding the work of the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency was challenged on a broad front yesterday.

Launching what promises to be a continuing series of lawsuits, Morton H. Halperin filed three complaints demanding disclosure of the CIA's January report to President Ford on illegal domestic activities, CIA budgetary information, and a six-year summary of NSC studies and decision memoranda.

A former NSC staff member and onetime White House aide to Henry A. Kissinger, Halperin said the information had been denied him despite formal requests under the strengthened Freedom of Information Act that went into effect Feb. 19.

The litigation was initiattd as part of a project sponsored jointly by the nonprofit Center for National Security Studies here—with which Halperin is affiliated—and the American Civ li Lberties Unio. halperin also is suing for damages for the wiretapping of his homt telephone during the Nixon administration.

At a press conference yesterday, Halperin said the CIA has acknowledged it is subject to the new reedom of Information Act by making a few documents public in response to his requests.

One CIA memo, which Halperin released yesterday, shows that the agency's Domestic Operations Division was set up in 1963 under instructions likening it to a CIA "foreign field station."

"The future establishment of subordinate domestic bases is envisioned," Richard Helms, then-deputy director for CIA plans, said in the Feb. 11, 1963, memorandum.

The memo emphasized that "clandestine internal security or counterintelligence operations in the United States" as well as occasional "special activities" would be left to other units of the CIA. Helms said the essential relationship of the Domestic Operations Division to CIA headquarters would be "that of a foreign field station" with a wide variety of assignments.

Halperin said the memo "suggests something about how the CIA looks on the United States."

All details of the new division's "functions" were deleted from the two-page document provided Halperin. The CIA changed the name of the division in January, 1972, to the Foreign Resources Division.

The litigation for other documents that the CIA and NSC have refused to make public is being handled by attorneys John Shattuck, William Dobrovir, and Mark Lynch.

Halperin, acting as his own attorney, filed a fourth complaint against Secretary of State Kissinger for portions of two background briefings for reporters on the Vladivostok strategic arms limitation talks. Kissinger held the briefings last fall, and the State Department has refused to release some of the information.